A LECTURE

ON

EARLY MARRIAGE.

DELIVERED

AT

PURULIA,

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BY

RAM DYÁL CHUCKERBUTTY.

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TO

COLONEL E. T. DATTON, C.S.I.,

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

AS

A TOKEN

OF

RESPECT, ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE,

BY HIS HUMBLE SERVANT

RAM DYÁL CHUCKERBUTTY.

A LECTURE
ON
EARLY MARRIAGE.

EARLY marriage is the source of all evils. By early marriage is meant the marriage which takes place at fifteen or sixteen years of age. This is, indeed, not the proper age when it ought to take place. This evil practice is prevalent to a mischievous extent in our country. It would have been for the benefit of our country, had the marriage taken place at the age above referred to; for thereby the young men of our country would have been saved from a great deal of evils, and it would have assuredly conduced to their happiness and prosperity. But instead of marriages taking place at the above-stated time, they generally, almost always, take place at twelve or thirteen years of age; and sometimes, to the greatest misfortune of the bridegroom, it takes place at seven or eight years of age.

This practice of performing marriages at so early an age is injurious to the young boys of our country. It is useless to enter into the details of mentioning the evils that flow from it; but I cannot refrain from mentioning some of them. The first and most prominent evil that arises, is that young men's future improvement with regard to the intellectual powers is at once put a stop to. This is the suitable period when they should direct their attention and devote their time to studies, but alas! they are otherwise occupied. It is for this reason only that young men of our country cannot have the opportunity of fully and sometimes even

imperfectly developing their intellectual faculties. Keep aside the development of mental powers, there are numerous cases of young men's not learning the first elements of education; and this early neglect for learning is undoubtedly for their attention and time being otherwise employed.

Numerous examples might be quoted to shew that young men have been utterly ruined and have eventually turned out to be nuisance to their family and the society they move in, and have proved useless creatures to themselves and to the world. That the improvement in young men is stopped at once by this, is quite evident; but that this is universally the case cannot be admitted. Yes, there are also instances of young men rising to eminence and to have acquired a great deal of knowledge in spite of their being placed under this disadvantage; but this is very seldom the case; but the greatest part of young boys has been ruined by this evil practice. I leave it to my hearers' consideration to judge whether the early marriage greatly diminishes their intelligence, weakens their powers and renders them quite unfit to undertake any serious undertaking. It certainly enfeebles their intellectual powers; it does not only this, but it also stretches its evil consequences to every thing else; nay, it also interferes with their moral and religious desires and weakens their physical strength. What is more painful than that they are deprived of their physical strength and rendered quite useless and unimportant to themselves and to their family and unfit for any ordinary business. These are not the only evils that accrue from early marriage; there are numerous to be mentioned, but this brief space will not allow me to enter into all of them.

Another thing that we can observe, is that affection and regard, instead of being bestowed on proper persons, that is to say to parents, are shewed to them with whom the young boys are early associated. This golden rule of respecting their parents, obeying their commands, shewing all their affection to them when they grow old, is violated by this evil practice. Whatever be its tendency, it tends to evil and not to its opposite. This is indeed a very horrible sight. However, instead of dwelling for a long while on the evil consequences that arise from it, I shall talk a little on the advantages that arise from the opposite practice. The first and most important advantage that they reap is that they become healthy, stout and strong, and capable to undertake all sorts of undertaking whether of ordinary or of extraordinary nature. Their attention is wholly directed to their proper tasks, and they can acquire, within a short time, a great deal of knowledge, which could not be done if it be otherwise engaged. They become full of zeal and energy for all kinds of business. Their intellectual powers are fully developed. They store their minds with useful knowledge and information. They learn all the golden rules and laws of obeying their fathers and mothers, of making them happy and of lessoning their miseries and to do good to them in various ways. They obtain from education the valuable information of obeying their parents, and that they have taken a great deal of trouble to nuse them, to make them walk in the path of rectitude and wisdom when they were quite helpless and innocent. This good conviction of. the trouble that their parents have taken to train up their tender minds, will not be gained from anything else but from the lessons and instructions that they receive in their childhood, and also the belief that they owe a great deal

to their parents for the numerous embarrassments in order to initiate them in all the good ways, is also the result of early training.

The young minds, who have not received any sort of training in childhood owing to their early marriage, are not susceptible of such tender feelings, of the good rules of obeying their parents, to satisfy them in all their desires and to do everything that lies within their power to repay their kindness which they have showed to them when they were infant. I ask the opinion of my hearers, that can these good convictions be obtained by any other means than by good lessons and associations from boyhood?

Early marriage is not only the source of individual evils, but also of national misfortunes and calamities. In the country where this evil practice is prevalent, the people there are not distinguished for any extraordinary quality. They cannot enjoy any such pleasure, which the people of the country, where this practice is not allowed, do enjoy. They gradually sink down in the estimation of other nations. The people there are superior in all respects to the people who have given indulgence to this practice. By disallowing this practice, they obtain many-fold advantages which set them above other nations. They become, then, the most powerful nation in the world, never destined to yield to any temptation and thus eventually turn out to be one of the most powerful and accomplished nations in the world.

A nation—however supremely gifted may be of God, with natural endowments—however intelligent and noted for other intellectual powers—is never doomed to enjoy their gifts and to take advantage from them without

setting themselves free from all sorts of evil customs and practices. This practice, in my opinion, is the worst of all. The marriage in this country always takes place at such tender years that the bridegroom and bride cannot understand what it is. The marriage having taken place at so early an age when they cannot know what marriage is, when they grow old put them into perpetual troubles and quarrels; and marriage instead of being the source of happiness and pleasure, becomes the source of misery and trouble.

Our countrymen ought to discontinue this practice and ought to perform the marriages of their children at proper ages. By so doing they will come to possess an immense deal of advantages and happiness to which they will subject themselves, their country, and their children. These advantages they will reap not only in this world, but would descend from generation to generation, and it would be setting a good example to the succeeding generations. The children will thus have ample time at their disposal to finish their education and thus to render themselves fit for all sorts of employment. They will then arrive at such a stage of their life that will come to understand everything of this world, and then they will be in a position to taste the sweet pleasures that arise from marriage.

I believe, my hearers should not imagine that, whilst I condemn the practice with regard to early marriage of our country, I do prefer that of foreign countries. I equally condemn marriages taking place at an advanced period of life. To assign a proper age when marriage ought to be celebrated is not a simple matter, as on the celebration of marriage, whether it takes place at an early

or advanced age, depend to a considerable extent the welfare and happiness of a nation.

Whatever great difficulties the question may involve, I may venture to say that the proper age in which marriage should take place is between five-and-twenty and twenty years. Up to the twenty years of age a man may have an ample opportunity to finish his education and to give a proper training to his intellectual powers. He may then very easily store his mind with great deal of useful knowledge and information, which he cannot do with disturbed mind and divided attention. Not only does a young man acquire useful knowledge and information up to the twentieth year of his age, but also that his intellectual powers are fully developed and matured, and his mind settled to one specific object of great importance; and he is not left to be guided by undetermined course of life. He thus forms a character which becomes the foundation of his prosperity and happiness, and contributes assistance to the welfare of the community he moves in and proves by the dint of his merit to be a valuable member of his country.

As our countrymen are intelligent in almost all respects and favoured of God with natural powers, they might be able to prove still more glorious and valuable to their country with very lit le trouble, provided they banish this evil practice from their country. If they suffer their people to be ill-educated and their manners corrupted from their infancy, and punish them for the crimes to which they are naturally disposed from their boyhood, what is to be concluded from this; that they first make their children so, and then punish them for their wickedness.

May I be permitted to urge this upon my countrymen that they would not let this subject of importance pass unreflected. They, I feel assured, upon deliberate consideration, will arrive at a right conclusion. The natural position of our country, which is very close to the line, will not allow to introduce the practice of other countries, and which also will not be preferred by anybody. Our countrymen possess in equal degrees all the advantages that the other clever nations in the world possess. They are equally favoured of God with all the natural gifts; in some respects they are superior to others. Their penetration, power of reflection, and other abilities are so sharp that if they properly cultivate these, they will prove to be the best and most intelligent in the world and will be in a position to cope with the other nations of the world.

Many individuals of our country, even with imperfect education, are seen to be on the same level with the well-educated men of other countries. When it is observed that they are rivalling the fame of others even with imperfect education, what great expectations are arisen in our minds to think if they are properly and regularly brought up. The proper age for marriage is the period between twenty and twenty-five years of age. By this time the young men may finish their education and be initiated with all the best rules and principles for their guidance in this world. Their inclination will be directed to one particular pursuit or profession, which would be the basis or foundation of their prosperity and improvement. Thus they are made to pass their days in eternal happiness in this world as well as in the world to come. If they ever deviate from the established course, they are immediately brought to reason and endeavour

than best not to involve themselves in anything wrong or vicious. But an ignorant and uneducated man will never do so. They will never think that it is vicious to do things that are wrong or to have their inclinations that are bad satisfied, so they will more and more indulge in these things, till they are quite overpowered by the short-lived pleasures that they derive from them. It will be observed from these to what great deal of vices early marriage leads. That time which the young men should very properly and usefully make use of is otherwise occupied to their greatest disadvantages. The proper time for giving education to little children is that time when their mind is tender, capable of expansion and susceptible of all sorts of training. When mind is once settled in one particular direction, either good or bad, it is very hard for the young men to put it in the different course. When it is once settled to good purposes, it remains undivided, unagitated, capable of expansion and so in a better position to pick up high and serious course of life. In the beginning of our lives lie future happiness and advancement in life Desire for rising to honor and celebrity could be infused in the minds of men when they are young. If they once get this desire they do not require further encouragement and stimulus to excite them and to keep up their zeal This desire becomes invigorated with their age. Nothing, then, would be able to turn them from the course to which they are greatly attached. That knowledge and wisdom, which they will thus treasure up in their minds, will be the source of happiness throughout their lives. This would not only be the source of pleasure to themselves, but it would also be the source of pleasure to the society wherein they move. Thereby they would be in a position to do great services

to their country, which a man of good fortune cannot be expected to do.

As this bad practice tends to the utter subversion of all truth and humanity, it deserves the utmost detestation and discouragement of all who have either the love or honour of their country at heart. Every one, who has in him the love of his country, cannot but be highly offended at this wicked and ungenerous practice which is so much in use among us at present that it is become a kind of national crime, and distinguishes us from all the nations that lie about us.

FINIS.

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